

# 2011 - SCOTLAND

9 May 2011

## Skye's Totternish Peninsula

The temperature each day is 11 to 13 degrees in the sun - far to cold for the Nowaks!!

### CROFTS AND CROFTERS

The history of farming on Skye is interesting. We visited a olden day village re-created with traditional houses built from rock and with thatched roofs. We learned that life must have been very difficult. The land here is certainly not very arable and the people barely eked out a living on a typical croft - a farmlet leased to a crofter (farmer).

When the English defeated the Scots in 1745 much of the land was handed over to English landowners who were more ruthless than their Scottish counterparts. Increasing government taxes also ensured that crofters got deeper into debt and they were increasingly forced off their crofts when sheep farming became more profitable. These issues, and the catastrophic "potato blight", resulted in over 7000 crofters leaving Skye. It was referred to as "the clearances". Quite a number of crofters emigrated to Australia. The population of Skye was decimated. Due to local uprisings and resultant public pressure, the government eventually passed laws to ensure that crofters had better tenure and more rights. It is interesting to note that the population of Skye today is increasing dramatically because the tourists keep coming. People today are keen to learn about the harrowing hardships the locals went through. The beautiful but very austere land puts everything into context. A bridge connecting Skye to the mainland has made access to Skye much easier.



*Crofters houses are surprising comfortable*

Although the sun may be shining and the weather quite bright the very cold whipping wind ensures we never go outside without our heavy coats..





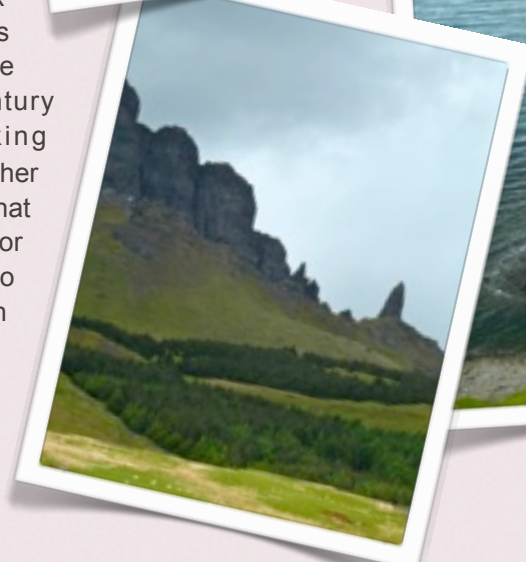
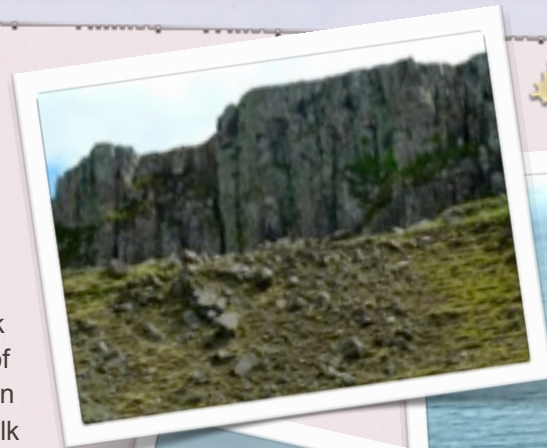
*We are intrigued to find public red phone booths AND red post boxes everywhere in Scotland (and England) - even in the most remote places.*

*The dramatic "Old Man of Storr" - a legendary Scottish pinnacle. It looks just like a painting.*



**THE TOTTERNISH COAST**

We spent the day driving leisurely along the coastline of the most northern Skye peninsula admiring the views and stopping occasionally to take photographs. We came across an iconic spindle of rock known as the "Old Man of Storr". It was finally climbed in 1958. We also stopped to walk a track overlooking steep cliffs where below we could see remnants of an early century manufacturing plant making ingredients for dynamite. Heather spied through her binoculars that the ruins were perfect shelter for a mother sheep and her two lambs. Our final attraction before catching the ferry to the Outer Hebrides was a reconstruction of an old crofter's village with its authentic buildings and many period artifacts.

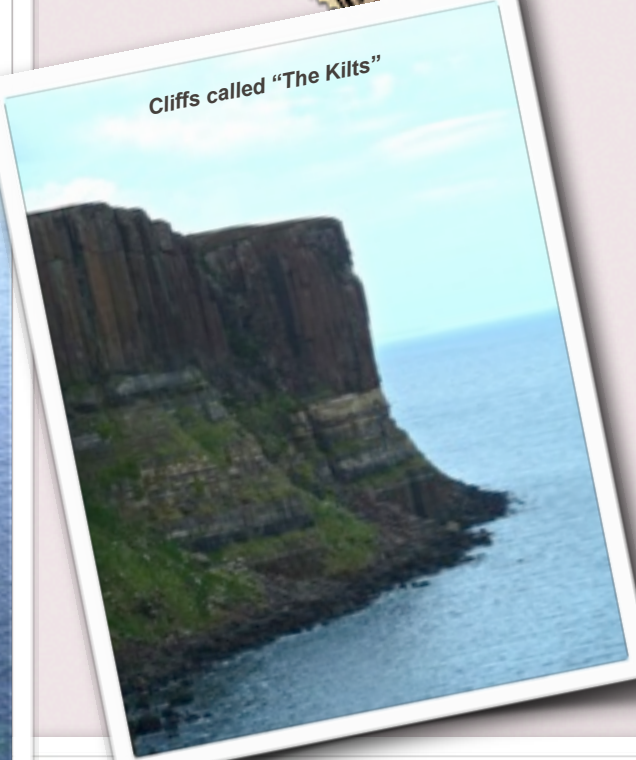




*Dramatic coastline with waterfall*



*Cliffs called "The Kilts"*



*But for the freezing wind this seemed like a perfect place to sit and relax*

